



CONNECTICUT PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
Testimony in support of
HB 5305- AN ACT CONCERNING CADMIUM LEVELS IN CHILDREN'S JEWELRY
CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE
MARCH 6, 2014

Dear Distinguished Members of the Children's Committee,

The Connecticut Public Health Association supports **HB 5305 – AN ACT CONCERNING CADMIUM LEVELS IN CHILDREN'S JEWELRY** because the bill, as written, merely extends the enactment date and does not lower Connecticut's standards for the amount of cadmium that can be used in children's jewelry. We base our support on studies that show cadmium poses a significant health threat to children, but we also appreciate that manufacturers often need time to make the changes in their products.

In the past, the Connecticut Legislature has been very proactive in protecting children's health by phasing out lead, asbestos and even Bisphenol A (BPA) from items used by children. Four years ago, the Legislature recognized the dangers that Cadmium exposure posed to young children and passed legislation requiring that children's jewelry not contain more than .0075 of cadmium. The bill before you gives the jewelry industry additional time to comply with Connecticut's law – while this isn't ideal, we are pleased that the .0075 stays constant to protect children from exposure to this toxic heavy metal.

Cadmium is a toxic metal commonly found in nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cad) batteries, paints, metal coatings, and plastics, and is a prevalent environmental contaminant. [1,2,3] Recently, cadmium has been used in making jewelry, often as part of the metal alloys in pendants and charms commonly found in children's jewelry. [1] Manufacturers, particularly those based in India and China, are replacing lead with cadmium as lead has been banned from children's products in many states. [1]

Unfortunately, there is no adequate regulatory system in the United States to ensure chemicals are safe and to prevent toxic substances from being used in children's products. Before using new chemicals in consumer products, current federal regulations do not require manufacturers to prove their safety--the burden falls to consumer to demonstrate that a chemical is toxic [4]. In fact, only 200 of the 80,000 chemicals created over the past thirty years have been adequately tested for their effects on human health [1,3,4].

Cadmium exposure should be limited in children as much as possible to prevent potential health effects in children, and the accumulation of cadmium that may cause diseases later in life. [5] More research is needed to determine the exact effects of cadmium on children; however, there is enough compelling evidence that cadmium is harmful to humans.

When you take into account that small children often put items in their mouths, their exposure risk is increased even more. CPHA maintains that we should not be increasing our youth's exposure to a heavy metal that has been associated with kidney and prostate cancers and hormone-dependent cancers of the breast and endometrium. [6]

There are enormous public health and economic costs associated with the presence of toxic chemicals and metals in our children's environments. Currently, \$8,508 is spent per person per year on health care in the United States. [7]. Add to this number, which as of November of 2013 was the highest in the world, the additional costs of unemployment or the loss of productivity associated with chronic disease and people should take notice. CPHA believes that phasing out harmful chemicals and metals from children's products may result in the reduction of the incidence of diseases linked with toxic chemicals, reduce overall health care expenditures and improve public health. [1]

The Connecticut Public Health Association respectfully urges members of the Children's Committee to support this legislation.

References

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